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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000475

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NSC FOR MILLARD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: SA DAS PATTERSON'S MEETING WITH KING
GYANENDRA

REF: A. KATHMANDU 0046

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 0279

Classified By: AMB. MICHAEL E. MALINOWSKI. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) In a March 16 meeting with Torkel Patterson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, and the Ambassador, King Gyanendra affirmed that there is "no question" that he is committed to democracy and identified handing over power to an elected government as his first priority. His role as constitutional monarch is "constructive"--to create "favorable conditions" to allow democracy to flourish. He said that he is promoting the goals of peace, stability and respect for human rights in all of his public and private communications and has warned the security forces that human rights abuses make them no better than the Maoists. End summary.

KING'S VISION FOR NEPAL:
"CONSTRUCTIVE" MONARCHY, ELECTIONS, DEMOCRACY

[1](#)2. (C) On March 16 Torkel Patterson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, accompanied by the

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Ambassador, called on King Gyanendra. DAS Patterson opened the meeting by explaining his interest in learning the King's vision for Nepal. DAS Patterson noted that Nepal's geographic location--situated between the two largest consumer markets in the world--offer it significant potential for economic development. Acknowledging Nepal's obvious political problems, including the insurgency, he said that the U.S. understands the King's stated commitment to restore democracy to the nation and is ready to help in that effort. Citing recent discussions with female political leaders, DAS Patterson commented that their cooperative spirit may have a role to play in resolving the political impasse, adding that the women were eager to share their suggestions with the King. The U.S. is committed to helping the Government of Nepal (GON) address the insurgency, he continued. While underscoring U.S. concern at continued reports of human rights violations, DAS Patterson commended recent progress in prosecuting certain high-profile cases.

[1](#)3. (C) The King responded that there is "no question" that he is committed to parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Handing over power to an elected government is his first priority, he averred; the hallmark of any democracy is recognizing the people's mandate as expressed in elections. The two interim governments he has appointed have not succeeded so far in fulfilling his instructions to provide good governance that is "pro-people," he charged; elections are long overdue. However, as King, he cannot determine when elections should be held; that is up to the Election Commission, the GON, and the security forces. He can only say that they must be held, he concluded.

[1](#)4. (C) A well-functioning democracy takes time to develop, he noted; Nepal has had only 13 years of practice. Ineffective and corrupt politicians will eventually be "weeded out" by the people's mandate, he said, but "I may not see it in my lifetime." In the meantime, it is up to the people to decide what kind of monarch they want: an icon, a father figure, or a judge, he continued. A current "cliche" circulating around Kathmandu criticizes him as an "active" monarch, he noted. He sees himself instead as a "constructive" monarch whose appropriate role is to create "favorable conditions" to allow democratic processes to evolve and flourish.

[1](#)5. (C) It is not up to him as King to judge the politicians, he commented; the people will judge them. The political leaders must get away from "this childish mud-throwing." He wants to talk to them about the "broader issues" confronting the nation, rather than be dragged into

their petty power squabbles. The democratic politicians must learn to practice democracy, he complained, noting that none of them has responded to his most recent appeal for consensus on such issues as good governance and national sovereignty (Ref A). Nor have the interim governments he appointed been successful in winning over broad-based political support, he acknowledged. Many people are sitting on the fence to see which way the wind blows, he added; "we must bring them on board."

INSURGENCY

16. (C) In all of his public and private conversations, the King said he emphasizes three goals: peace, stability, and respect for human rights. Noting that his recent visits to the countryside had given him the chance to observe the challenging field conditions in which the security forces must operate, the King said the police, Army, and Armed Police Force are generally doing a good job. Commending the "wonderful relations" between the U.S. and the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), he expressed appreciation for U.S. security assistance and training. More help is needed, he added, to build the capacity of what had been primarily a ceremonial army up until late 2001. Despite GON efforts, the last negotiations were unsuccessful because the insurgents were not sincere, he charged. His succession of visits to the so-called Maoist heartland (Ref B) have disproved the insurgents' propagandistic claims to control large parts of Nepal's territory, he asserted. In general, he continued, the GON needs to "counter the ideology of the little red book" of the Maoists in the countryside. The people he met during those visits, whose lives have been disrupted by the insurgency, just want to go home, he reported.

17. (C) The GON has made mistakes with respect to human rights, he admitted. He said he tells the security forces that if they behave like Maoists, "what is the difference" between them and the Maoists? The government must be held to a higher standard than the terrorists, he asserted. That said, human rights concepts are new to Nepal, he cautioned, which is hampered by a "cumbersome" legal process. The security forces must be educated to the idea that they are accountable for violations, he concluded.

18. (C) Given the 1500 km open border Nepal shares with India, the GON must take into account its neighbor's influence on a variety of issues, the King acknowledged. Nonetheless, many Nepalis distrust Indian motives, he noted. While he said he does not believe the Indians' central government is giving Nepali Maoists tacit support, he "wonders" about some individual Indian states. In general, he said he wished India would be "more forthright" in its support for the GON's struggle against the Maoists.

COMMENT

19. (C) While we agree with the King that elections are the hallmark of democracy, we also note that political participation is the hallmark of free and fair elections. Our past and present discussions with political leaders to date indicate a universal unwillingness to take part, both because of security concerns and a general mistrust of the King's motives. It is not enough for the Prime Minister to urge the parties' cooperation; he has been doing so to no avail for the past nine months. We commend the King's recognition that the people should decide what kind of monarch they want; the same recognition should be extended to the people's representatives, whom, their personal foibles notwithstanding, the people have chosen to elect time and again. If the King truly is committed to having elections take place, he himself must try to reach an accommodation with the political leaders that will foster their cooperation and participation in his plans.

110. (U) DAS Patterson has cleared this message.

MALINOWSKI